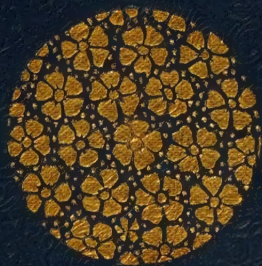


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BY RICHARD WATSON GILDER



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## LYRICS

By R. W. GILDER

- I. THE NEW DAY
- II. THE CELESTIAL PASSION
- III. LYRICS



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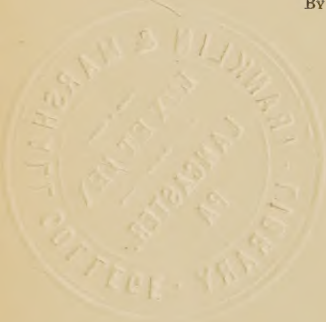
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DECORATIONS BY H. DE K.









## ODE.

I AM the spirit of the morning sea ;  
I am the awakening and the glad surprise ;  
I fill the skies  
With laughter and with light.  
Not tears, but jollity  
At birth of day brim the strong man-child's eyes.  
Behold the white  
Wide three-fold beams that from the hidden sun  
Rise swift and far,—  
One where Orion keeps  
His armed watch, and one  
That to the midmost starry heaven upleaps ;  
The third blots out the firm-fixed Northern Star.

I am the wind that shakes the glittering wave,  
Hurries the snowy spume along the shore

And dies at last in some far-murmuring cave.  
My voice thou hearest in the breaker's roar,—  
That sound which never failed since time began,  
And first around the world the shining tumult ran.

## II.

I light the sea and wake the sleeping land.  
My footsteps on the hills make music, and my hand  
Plays like a harper's on the wind-swept pines.

With the wind and the day  
I follow round the world—away ! away !  
Wide over lake and plain my sunlight shines  
And every wave and every blade of grass  
Doth know me as I pass ;  
And me the western sloping mountains know, and me  
The far-off, golden sea.

O sea, whereon the passing sun doth lie !  
O man, who watchest by that golden sea !  
Weep not,—O weep not thou, but lift thine eye  
And see me glorious in the sunset sky !

## III.

I love not the night  
Save when the stars are bright,  
Or when the moon  
Fills the white air with silence like a tune.  
Yea, even the night is mine  
When the Northern Lights outshine,  
And all the wild heavens throb in ecstasy divine;—  
Yea, mine deep midnight, though the black sky lowers,  
When the sea burns white and breaks on the shore  
in starry showers.

## IV.

I am the laughter of the new-born child  
On whose soft-breathing sleep an angel smiled.  
And I all sweet first things that are:  
First songs of birds, not perfect as at last,—  
Broken and incomplete,—  
But sweet, oh, sweet!  
And I the first faint glimmer of a star  
To the wrecked ship that tells the storm is past;  
The first keen smells and stirrings of the Spring;

First snow-flakes, and first May-flowers after snow;  
The silver glow  
Of the new moon's ethereal ring;  
The song the morning stars together made,  
And the first kiss of lovers under the first June shade.

## v.

My sword is quick, my arm is strong to smite  
In the dread joy and fury of the fight.  
I am with those who win, not those who fly;  
With those who live I am, not those who die.  
Who die? Nay—nay—that word  
Where I am is unheard;  
For I am the spirit of youth that cannot change,  
Nor cease, nor suffer woe;  
And I am the spirit of beauty that doth range  
Through natural forms and motions, and each show  
Of outward loveliness. With me have birth  
All gentleness and joy in all the earth.  
Raphael knew me, and showed the world my face;  
Me Homer knew, and all the singing race,—  
For I am the spirit of light, and life, and mirth.



A SONG OF EARLY SUMMER.

Not yet the orchard lifted

Its cloudy bloom to the sky,  
Nor through the twilight drifted  
The whip-poor-will's low cry;

The gray rock had not made

Of the vine its glistening kirtle;  
Nor shook in the locust shade  
The purple bells of the "myrtle."

Not yet up the chimney-hollow

Was heard in the darkling night  
The boom and whirl of the swallow  
And the twitter that follows the flight;

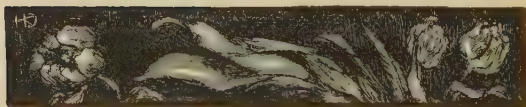
Before the foamy whitening

Of the water below the mill;  
Ere yet the summer lightning  
Shone red at the edge of the hill —

In the time of sun and showers,  
Of skies half-black, half-clear;  
'Twixt melting snows and flowers;  
At the poise of the flying year;

When woods flushed pink and yellow  
In dreams of leafy June;  
And days were keen or mellow  
Like tones in a changing tune—

Before the birds had broken  
Forth in their song divine,  
Oh! then the word was spoken  
That made my darling mine.



A MIDSUMMER SONG.

OH, father's gone to market-town, he was up before  
the day,

And Jamie's after robins, and the man is making  
hay,

And whistling down the hollow goes the boy that  
minds the mill,

While mother from the kitchen-door is calling with  
a will,

“Polly!—Polly!—The cows are in the corn!  
Oh, where's Polly?”

From all the misty morning air there comes a sum-  
mer sound,—

A murmur as of waters from skies, and trees and  
ground.

The birds they sing upon the wing, the pigeons bill  
and coo,

And over hill and hollow rings again the loud halloo:

“Polly!—Polly!—The cows are in the corn!  
Oh, where's Polly?”

Above the trees the honey-bees swarm by with buzz  
and boom,

And in the field and garden a thousand blossoms  
bloom.

Within the farmer's meadow a brown-eyed daisy blows,  
And down at the edge of the hollow a red and  
thorny rose.

But Polly! — Polly! — The cows are in the corn!  
Oh, where 's Polly?

How strange at such a time of day the mill should  
stop its clatter!

The farmer's wife is listening now and wonders what 's  
the matter.

Oh, wild the birds are singing in the wood and on  
the hill,

While whistling up the hollow goes the boy that  
minds the mill.

But Polly! — Polly! — The cows are in the corn!  
Oh, where 's Polly?



*"ON THE WILD ROSE TREE."*

ON the wild rose tree  
Many buds there be,  
Yet each sunny hour  
Hath but one perfect flower.

'Thou who wouldst be wise  
Open wide thine eyes,—  
In each sunny hour  
Pluck the one perfect flower!

## A SONG OF EARLY AUTUMN.

WHEN late in summer the streams run yellow,  
    Burst the bridges and spread into bays;  
When berries are black and peaches are mellow,  
    And hills are hidden by rainy haze;

When the golden-rod is golden still,  
    But the heart of the sun-flower is darker and sadder;  
When the corn is in stacks on the slope of the hill,  
    And slides o'er the path the striped adder.

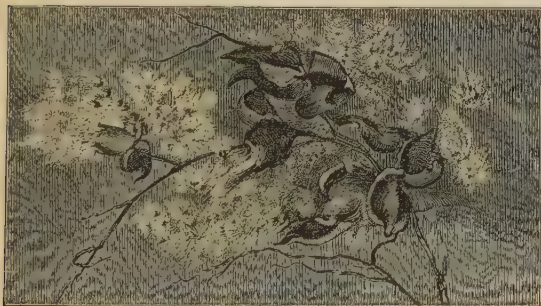
When butterflies flutter from clover to thicket,  
    Or wave their wings on the drooping leaf;  
When the breeze comes shrill with the call of the  
    cricket,  
Grasshoppers' rasp, and rustle of sheaf.

When high in the field the fern-leaves wrinkle,  
    And brown is the grass where the mowers have  
    mown;  
When low in the meadow the cow-bells tinkle,  
    And small brooks crinkle o'er stock and stone.

When heavy and hollow the robin's whistle,  
And shadows are deep in the heat of noon;  
When the air is white with the down o' the thistle,  
And the sky is red with the harvest moon;

Oh then be chary, young Robert and Mary,  
No time let slip, not a moment wait!  
If the fiddle would play it must stop its tuning,  
And they who would wed must be done with  
their mooning.

Let the churn rattle, see well to the cattle,  
And pile the wood by the barn-yard gate!



## THE BUILDING OF THE CHIMNEY.

## I.

My chimney is builded  
On a hill by the sea,  
At the edge of a wood  
That the sunset has gilded  
Since time was begun  
And the earth first was done:  
For mine and for me  
And for you, John Burroughs,  
My friend old and good,  
At the edge of a wood  
On a hill by the sea  
My chimney is builded.

## II.

My chimney gives forth  
All its heat to the north,  
While its right arm it reaches  
Toward the meadows and beaches,  
And its left it extends  
To its pine-tree friends.  
All its heat to the north  
My chimney gives forth.

## III.

My chimney is builded  
Of red and gray granite:  
Of great split bowlders  
Are its thighs and its shoulders;  
Its mouth — try to span it.

'Tis a nine-foot block —  
The shelf that hangs over  
The stout hearth-rock.

Then the lines they upswell  
Like a huge church-bell,  
Or a bellying sail  
In a stiff south gale  
When the ship rolls well,  
With a blue sky above her.

## IV.

My chimney—come view it,  
And I'll tell you, John Burroughs,  
What is built into it:  
First the derrick's shrill creak,  
That perturbed the still air  
With a cry of despair;  
The lone traveler who passed  
At the fall of the night  
If he saw not its mast  
Stood still with affright  
At a sudden strange sound—  
Hark! a woman's wild shriek?  
Or the baying of a hound?



'Then the stone-hammer's clink  
And the drill's sharp tinkle,  
And bird-songs that sprinkle  
Their notes through the wood,  
(With pine-odors scented),  
On their swift way to drink  
At the spring cold and good  
That bubbles 'neath the stone  
Where the red chieftain tented  
In the days that are gone.

Yes, 'twixt granite and mortar  
Many songs, long or shorter,  
Are imprisoned in the wall;  
And when red leaves shall fall,—  
Coming home, all in herds,  
From the air to the earth,—  
When I have my heart's desire,  
And we sit by the hearth  
In the glow of the fire,  
You and I, John of Birds,  
We shall hear as they call

From the gray granite wall,—  
You shall name one and all.

There's the crow's caw-cawing  
From the pine-tree's height,  
And the cat-bird's sawing,  
The hissing of the adder  
That climbed this rocky ladder,  
And the song of Bob White;  
The robin's loud clatter,  
The chipmunk's chatter,  
And the mellow-voiced bell  
That the cuckoo strikes well;  
Yes, betwixt the stones and in  
There is built a merry din.

But not all bright and gay  
Are the songs we shall hear;  
For as day turns to gray  
Comes a voice low and clear—  
Whip-poor-will sounds his wail  
Over hill, over dale,

Till the soul fills with fright.  
'Tis the bird that was heard  
On the fields drenched with blood.  
By the dark southern flood  
When they died in the night.

## v.

But you cannot split granite,  
Howsoever you may plan it,  
Without bringing blood —  
(There's a drop of mine there  
On that block four-square).  
Certain oaths, I'm aware,  
Sudden, hot, and not good  
(May Heaven cleanse the guilt!)  
In these stone walls are built —  
With the wind through the pine-wood blowing,  
The creak of tree on tree,  
Child-laughter, and the lowing  
Of the homeward-driven cattle,  
The sound of wild birds singing,

Of steel on granite ringing,  
The memory of battle,  
And tales of the roaring sea.

## VI.

For my chimney was builded  
By a Plymouth County sailor,  
An old North Sea whaler.  
In the warm noon spell  
'Twas good to hear him tell  
Of the great September blow  
A dozen years ago:  
How at dawn of the day  
The wind began to play,  
Till it cut the waves flat  
Like the brim of your hat.  
There was no sea about,  
But it blew straight out  
Till the ship lurched over;  
But 'twas quick to recover,  
When, all of a stroke,

The hurricane it broke; —  
Great heavens! how it roared,  
And how the rain poured;  
The thirty-fathom chain  
Dragged out all in vain.  
“What next?” the captain cried  
To the mate by his side;  
Then Tip Ryder he replied:  
“Fetch the axe — no delay —  
Cut the main-mast away;  
If you want to save the ship  
Let the main-mast rip!”  
But another said, “Wait!”  
And they did — till too late.  
On her beam-ends she blew,  
In the sea half the crew —  
Struggling back through the wrack,  
There to cling day and night.  
Not a sail heaves in sight;  
And, the worst, one in thirst  
(Knows no better, the poor lad!)  
Drinks salt water and goes mad.

Eighty hours blown and tossed,  
Five good sailors drowned and lost,  
And the rest brought to shore;  
— Some to sail as before;  
“Not Tip Ryder, if he starves  
Building chimneys, building wharves!”

## VII.

Now this was the manner  
Of the building of the chimney.  
(’Tis a good old-timer,  
As you, friend John, will own.)  
Old man Vail cut the stone;  
William Ryder was the builder;  
Stanford White was the planner,  
And the owner and rhymer  
Is Richard Watson Gilder.

*"A WORD SAID IN THE DARK."*

A word said in the dark  
And hands pressed, for a token ;  
    " Now, little maiden, mark  
The word that you have spoken ;  
Be not your promise broken ! "

His lips upon her cheek  
Felt tears among their kisses ;  
    " O pardon I bespeak  
If for my doubting this is !  
Now all my doubting ceases. "



## A RIDDLE OF LOVERS.

OF my fair lady's lovers there were two  
Who loved her more than all; nor she, nor they  
Guessed which of these loved better, for one way  
This had of loving, that another knew.  
One round her neck brave arms of empire threw  
And covered her with kisses where she lay:  
The other sat apart, nor did betray  
Sweet sorrow at that sight; but rather drew  
His pleasure of his lady through the soul  
And sense of this one. So there truly ran  
Two separate loves through one embrace; the whole  
This lady had of both, when one began  
To clasp her close, and win her dear lips' goal.  
Now read my lovers' riddle if you can.

## BEFORE SUNRISE.

THE winds of morning move and sing,  
The western stars are lingering;  
In the pale east one planet still  
Shines large above King Philip's hill;—

And near, in gold against the blue,  
The old moon, in its arms the new.  
Lo, the deep waters of the bay  
Stir with the breath of hurrying day.

Wake, loved one, wake and look with me  
Across the narrow, dawn-lit sea!  
Such beauty is not wholly mine  
Till thou, dear heart, hast made it thine.

**"THE WOODS THAT BRING THE  
SUNSET NEAR."**

THE wind from out the west is blowing,  
The homeward-wandering cows are lowing,  
Dark grow the pine-woods, dark and drear,—  
The woods that bring the sunset near.

When o'er wide seas the sun declines,  
Far off its fading glory shines,  
Far off, sublime, and full of fear—  
The pine-woods bring the sunset near.

This house that looks to east, to west,  
This, dear one, is our home, our rest;  
Yonder the stormy sea, and here  
The woods that bring the sunset near.

## SUNSET FROM THE TRAIN.

## I.

BUT then the sunset smiled,  
Smiled once and turned toward dark,  
Above the distant, wavering line of trees that filed  
Along the horizon's edge;  
Like hooded monks that hark  
Through evening air  
The call to prayer;—  
Smiled once, and faded slow, slow, slow away;  
When, like a changing dream, the long cloud-wedge,  
Brown-gray,  
Grew saffron underneath, and ere I knew,  
The interspace, green-blue—  
The whole, illimitable, western, skyey shore,  
The tender, human, silent sunset smiled once more.

## II.

Thee, absent loved one, did I think on now,  
Wondering if thy deep brow  
In dreams of me were lifted to the skies,  
Where, by our far sea-home, the sunlight dies;  
If thou didst stand alone,  
Watching the day pass slowly, slow, as here,  
But closer and more dear,  
Beyond the meadow and the long, familiar line  
Of blackening pine;  
When lo! that second smile,—dear heart, it was  
thine own.

*"AFTER SORROW'S NIGHT."*

AFTER sorrow's night  
Dawned the morning bright.  
In dewy woods I heard  
A golden-throated bird,  
    And "Love, love, love," it sang,  
    And "Love, love, love."

Evening shadows fell  
In our happy dell.  
From glimmering woods I heard  
A golden-throated bird,  
    And "Love, love, love," it sang,  
    And "Love, love, love."

Oh, the summer night  
Starry was and bright.  
In the dark woods I heard  
A golden-throated bird,  
    And "Love, love, love," it sang,  
    And "Love, love, love."

## A NOVEMBER CHILD.

NOVEMBER winds, blow mild  
On this new-born child !  
Spirit of the autumn wood,  
Make her gentle, make her good !  
Still attend her,  
And befriend her,  
Fill her days with warmth and color ;  
Keep her safe from winter's dolor,  
On thy bosom  
Hide this blossom  
Safe from summer's rain and thunder !  
When those eyes of light and wonder  
Tire at last of earthly places —  
Full of years and full of graces —  
Then, O then  
Take her back to heaven again !

## AT NIGHT.

THE sky is dark, and dark the bay below  
Save where the midnight city's pallid glow  
Lies like a lily white  
On the black pool of night.

O rushing steamer, hurry on thy way  
Across the swirling Kills and gusty bay,  
To where the eddying tide  
Strikes hard the city's side!

For there, between the river and the sea,  
Beneath that glow,—the lily's heart to me,—  
A sleeping mother mild,  
And by her breast a child.



## CRADLE SONG.

IN the embers shining bright  
A garden grows for thy delight,  
With roses yellow, red, and white.

But, O my child, beware, beware!  
Touch not the roses growing there,  
For every rose a thorn doth bear.

"NINE YEARS."

NINE years to heaven had flown,  
And June came, with June's token —  
The wild rose that had known  
A maiden's silence broken.

'Twas thus the lover spoke,  
And thus she leaned and listened:  
(Below, the billows broke,  
The blue sea shook and glistened,)

"We have been happy, Love,  
Through bright and stormy weather,  
Happy all hope above,  
For we have been together.

"To meet, to love, to wed —  
Joy without stint or measure —  
This was our lot," he said,  
"To find untouched our treasure;

“ But had some blindfold fate  
Bound each unto another —  
To turn from Heaven’s gate,  
Each heart-throb hide and smother!

“ O dear and faithful heart  
If thus had we been fated;  
To meet, to know, to part —  
Too early, falsely, mated!

“ Were this our bitter plight,  
Ah, could we have dissembled?”  
Her cheek turned pale with fright;  
She hid her face, and trembled.

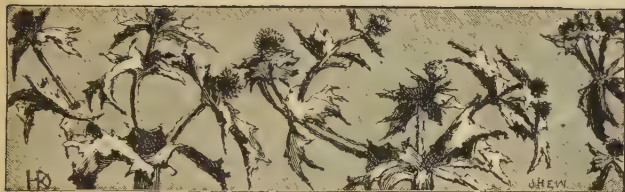
“BACK FROM THE DARKNESS TO THE  
LIGHT AGAIN.”

“BACK from the darkness to the light again!”—  
Not from the darkness, Love, for hadst thou lain  
Within the shadowy portal of the tomb,  
Thy light had warmed the darkness into bloom.



II.





## FATE.

I FLUNG a stone into a grassy field:  
How many tiny creatures there may yield  
(I thought) their petty lives through that rude shock!  
To me a pebble, 'tis to them a rock,  
Gigantic, cruel, fraught with sudden death.  
Perhaps it crushed an ant, perhaps its breath  
Alone tore down a white and glittering palace,  
And the small spider damns the giant's malice  
Who wrought the wreck — blasted his pretty art!

Who knows what day some saunterer, light of heart,  
An idle wanderer through the fields of space,  
Large-limbed, big-brained, to whom our puny race  
Seems small as insects,— one whose footstep jars



On some vast world-orb islanded by stars,—  
May fling a stone and crush our earth to bits,  
And all that men have builded by their wits?

“Ah, what a loss!” you say; “our bodies go,  
But not our temples, statues, and the glow  
Of glorious canvases; and not the pages  
Our poets have illumed through myriad ages.  
What boots the insect’s loss? Another day  
Will see the self-same ant-hill and the play  
Of light on dainty web the same. But blot  
All human art from this terrestrial plot,  
Something indeed would pass that nevermore  
Would light the universe as once before!”

The spider’s work is not original,—  
You hold,—but what of ours? I fear that all  
We do is just the same thing over and over.  
Take Life: you have the woman and her lover,—  
’Tis old as Eden,—nought is new in that!  
Take Building, and you reach ere long the flat  
Nile desert sands, by way of France, Rome,  
Greece.

And there is poetry—our bards increase

In numbers, not in sweetness, not in force,  
Since he, sublimest poet of our globe,  
Forgotten now, poured forth the chant of Job,—  
Where Man with the Eternal holds discourse.  
No, no! The forms may change, but even they  
Come round again. Could we but truly scan it,  
We'd find in the heavens some little, busy planet,  
Whence all we are was borrowed. If to-day  
The imagined giant flung his ponderous stone,  
And we and all our far-stretched schemes were done,  
His were a scant remorse and short-lived trouble,—  
Like mine for those small creatures in the stubble.

"WE MET UPON THE CROWDED WAY."

I.

WE met upon the crowded way ;  
 We spoke and passed. How bright the day  
 Turned from that moment, for a light  
 Did shine from her to make it bright !  
 And then I asked : Can such as she  
 From life be blotted utterly ?  
 The thoughts from those clear eyes that dawn—  
 Down to the ground can they be drawn ?

II.

Among the mighty who can find  
 One that hath a perfect mind ?  
 Angry, jealous, cursed by feuds,—  
 They own the sway of fatal moods ;  
 But thou dost perfect seem to me  
 In thy divine simplicity.  
 Though from the heavens the stars be wrenched,  
 Thy light, dear maid, shall not be quenched.  
 Gentle, and true, and pure, and free—  
 The gods will not abandon thee !

THE WHITE AND THE RED ROSE.

I.

IN Heaven's happy bowers  
There blossom two flowers,  
One with fiery glow  
And one as white as snow;  
While lo! before them stands,  
With pale and trembling hands,  
A spirit who must choose  
One, and one refuse.

II.

Oh, tell me of these flowers  
That bloom in heavenly bowers,  
One with fiery glow,  
And one as white as snow!  
And tell me who is this  
In Heaven's holy bliss  
Who trembles and who cries  
Like a mortal soul that dies!

## III.

These blossoms two  
Wet with heavenly dew—  
The Gentle Heart is one,  
And one is Beauty's own;  
And the spirit here that stands  
With pale and trembling hands—  
Before to-morrow's morn  
Will be a child new-born,  
Will be a mortal maiden  
With earthly sorrows laden;  
But of these shining flowers  
That bloom in heavenly bowers,  
To-day she still may choose  
One, and one refuse.

## IV.

Will she pluck the crimson flower  
And win Beauty's dower?  
Will she choose the better part

And gain the Gentle Heart?  
Awhile she weeping waits  
Within those pearly gates;  
Alas! the mortal maiden  
With earthly sorrow laden;  
Her tears afresh they start,—  
She has chosen the Gentle Heart.

## v.

And now the spirit goes,  
In her breast the snow-white rose.  
When hark! a voice that calls  
Within the garden walls:  
“Thou didst choose the better part,  
Thou hast won the Gentle Heart,—  
Lo, now to thee is given  
The red rose of Heaven.”

•

*A WOMAN'S THOUGHT.*

I AM a woman—therefore I may not  
Call to him, cry to him,  
Fly to him,  
Bid him delay not!

And when he comes to me, I must sit quiet :  
Still as a stone —  
All silent and cold.  
If my heart riot—  
Crush and defy it!  
Should I grow bold—  
Say one dear thing to him,  
All my life fling to him,  
Cling to him—  
What to atone  
Is enough for my sinning!

This were the cost to me,  
This were my winning—  
That he were lost to me.

Not as a lover  
At last if he part from me,  
Tearing my heart from me —  
Hurt beyond cure,—  
Calm and demure  
Then must I hold me —  
In myself fold me —  
Lest he discover;  
Showing no sign to him  
By look of mine to him  
What he has been to me —  
How my heart turns to him,  
Follows him, yearns to him,  
Prays him to love me.

Pity me, lean to me,  
Thou God above me!



## THE RIVER INN.

THE night was black and drear  
Of the last day of the year.  
Two guests to the river inn  
Came, from the wide world's bound:  
One with clangor and din,  
The other without a sound.

“Now hurry, servants and host!  
Get the best that your cellars boast:  
White be the sheets and fine,  
And the fire on the hearth-stone bright;  
Pile the wood, and spare not the wine,  
And call him at morning-light.”

“ But where is the silent guest?  
In what chamber shall she rest?  
In this! Should she not go higher?  
'Tis damp, and the fire is gone.”  
“ You need not kindle the fire,  
You need not call her at dawn.”

Next morn he sallied forth  
On his journey to the North.  
Oh, bright the sunlight shone  
Through boughs that the breezes stir;  
But for her was lifted a stone  
Under the church-yard fir.

## THE HOMESTEAD.

## I.

HERE stays the house, here stay the self-same places,  
Here the white lilacs\_and the buttonwoods ;  
Here are the pine-groves, there the river-floods,  
And there the threading brook that interlaces  
Green meadow-bank with meadow-bank the same.  
The melancholy nightly chorus came  
Long, long ago from the same pool, and yonder  
Stark poplars lift in the same twilight air  
Their ancient shadows : nearer still, and fonder,  
The black-heart cherry-tree's gaunt branches bare  
Rasp on the same old window where I ponder.

## II.

And we, the only living, only pass;  
We come and go, whither and whence we know not:  
From birth to bound the same house keeps, alas!  
New lives as gently as the old; there show not  
Among the haunts that each had thought his own  
The looks that partings bring to human faces.  
The black-heart there, that heard my earliest moan,  
And yet shall hear my last, like all these places  
I love so well, unloving lives from child  
To child; from morning joy to evening sorrow—  
Untouched by joy, by anguish undefiled:  
All one the generations gone, and new;  
All one dark yesterday and bright to-morrow;  
To the old tree's insensate sympathy  
All one the morning and the evening dew—  
My far, forgotten ancestor and I.

## AT FOUR-SCORE.

THIS is the house she was born in, full four-score  
years ago,—  
And here she is living still, bowed and ailing, but  
clinging  
Still to this wonted life,—like an ancient and blasted  
oak-tree,  
Whose dying roots yet clasp the earth with an iron  
hold.

This is the house she was born in, and yonder across  
the bay  
Is the home her lover built,—for her and for him and  
their children;  
Daily she watched it grow, from dawn to the evening  
twilight,  
As it rose on the orchard hill, 'mid the spring-time  
showers and bloom.

There is the village church, its steeple over the  
trees

Rises and shows the clock she has watched since the  
day it was started,—

'Tis many a year ago, how many she cannot  
remember:

Now solemnly over the water rings out the evening  
hour.

And there in that very church,—though, alas, how  
bedizened, and changed!

They've painted it up, she says, in their queer, new,  
modern fashion,—

There on a morning in June, she gave her hand to her  
husband;

Her heart it was his (she told him) long years and  
years before.

Now here she sits at the window, gazing out on steeple  
and hill;

All but the houses have gone,—the church, and the  
trees, and the houses;—

All, all have gone long since, parents, and husband,  
and children;  
And herself—she thinks, at times, she too has vanished  
and gone.

No, it cannot be she who stood in the church that  
morning in June,  
Nor she who felt at her breast the lips of a child in  
the darkness:  
But hark in the gathering dusk comes a low, quick  
moan of anguish,—  
Ah, it is she indeed, who has lived, who has loved,  
and lost.

For she thinks of a wintry night, when her last was  
taken away,  
Forty years this very month, the last, the fairest, the  
dearest;  
All gone,—ah, yes, it is she who has loved, who has  
lost, and suffered,  
She and none other it is, left alone in her sorrow and  
pain.

Still with its sapless roots, that stay though the branches  
have dropped,

Have withered, and fallen, and gone, their strength  
and their glory forgotten ;

Still with the life that remains, silent, and faithful, and  
steadfast,

Through sunshine and bending storm clings the oak  
to its mother-earth.



## JOHN CARMAN.

## I.

JOHN CARMAN of Carmeltown

Worked hard through the livelong day;  
He drove his awl and he snapped his thread  
And he had but little to say.

He had but little to say

Except to a neighbor's child:  
Three summers old she was, and her eyes  
Had a look that was deep and wild.

Her hair was heavy and brown

Like clouds in a starry night.  
She came and sat by the cobbler's bench  
And his soul was filled with delight.

No kith nor kin had he

And he never went gadding about;  
A strange, shy man, the people said;  
They could not make him out.

And some of them shook their heads  
And would never tell what they'd heard.  
But he drove his awl and snapped his thread,—  
And he always kept his word ;

And the little child that knew him  
Better than all the rest,  
She threw her arms around his neck  
And went to sleep on his breast.

One day in that dreadful summer  
When children died by the score,  
John Carman glanced from his work and saw  
Her mother there at the door.

He knew by the look on her face,—  
And his own turned deathly white ;  
He rose from his bench and followed her out  
And watched by the child that night.

He tended her day and night ;  
He watched by her night and day :  
He saw the cruel pain in her eyes ;  
He saw her lips turn gray.

## II.

The day that the child was buried  
John Carman went back to his last,  
And the neighbors said that for weeks and weeks  
Not a word his clenched lips passed.

"He takes it hard," they gossiped,  
"Poor man, he's lacking in wit": —  
"I'll drop in to-day," said Deacon Gray,  
"And comfort him up a bit."

So Deacon Gray dropped in  
With a kind and neighborly air,  
And before he left he knelt on the floor  
And wrestled with God in prayer.

And he said: "O Lord, thou hast stricken  
This soul in its babyhood:  
In Thy own way, we beseech and pray,  
Bring forth from evil good."

## III.

That night the fire-bells rang  
And the flames shot up to the sky,  
And into the street as pale as a sheet  
The town-folk flock and cry.

The bells ring loud and long,  
The flames leap high and higher,  
The rattling engines come too late,—  
The old First Church is on fire!

And lo and behold in the lurid glare  
They see John Carman stand,—  
A look of mirth on his iron lips  
And a blazing torch in his hand.

“You say it was *He* who killed her”  
(His voice had a fearful sound):  
“I’d have you know, who love Him so,  
I’ve burned his house to the ground.”

. . . . .

John Carman died in prison,  
In the madman's cell, they say;  
And from his crime, that I've told in rhyme,  
Heaven cleanse his soul, I pray.



## DRINKING SONG.

## I.

THOU who lov'st and art forsaken,  
Didst believe, and wert mistaken,  
From thy dream thou wilt not waken

*When Death thee shall call.*

Like are infidel, believer,—  
The deceived, and the deceiver,

*When the grave hides all.*

## II.

What if thou be saint or sinner,  
Crooked gray-beard, straight beginner,—  
Empty paunch, or jolly dinner,

*When Death thee shall call.*

All alike are rich and richer,  
King with crown, and cross-legged stitcher,

*When the grave hides all.*

## III.

Hope not thou to live hereafter  
In men's memories and laughter,  
When, 'twixt hearth and ringing rafter,

*Death thee shall call.*

For we both shall be forgotten,  
Friend, when thou and I are rotten

*And the grave hides all.*

THE VOYAGER.

I.

“ FRIEND, why goest thou forth  
When ice-hills drift from the north  
And crush together ? ”

“ The Voice that me doth call  
Heeds not the ice-hill’s fall,  
Nor wind, nor weather.”

II.

“ But, friend, the night is black ;  
Behold the driving wrack  
And wild seas under ! ”

“ My straight and narrow bark  
Fears not the threatening dark,  
Nor storm, nor thunder.”



## III.

“ But oh, thy children dear!  
Thy wife — she is not here —  
I haste to bring her!”

“ No, no, it is too late!  
Hush, hush! I may not wait,  
Nor weep, nor linger.”

## IV.

“ Hark! Who is he that knocks  
With slow and dreadful shocks  
The walls to sever?”

“ It is my Master’s call,  
I go, whate’er befall;  
Farewell forever.”

A LAMENT

FOR THE DEAD OF THE "JEANNETTE" BROUGHT  
HOME ON THE "FRISIA."

I.

O GATES of ice! long have ye held our loved ones.  
Ye Cruel! how could ye keep from us them for  
whom our hearts yearned: our dear ones, our fathers,  
our children, our brothers, our lovers.

Cold and Sleet, Darkness and Ice! hard have ye  
held them; ye would not let them go.

Their hands ye have bound fast; their feet ye have  
detained; and well have ye laid hold upon the hearts  
of our loved ones.

O silent Arctic Night! thou hast wooed them from  
us.

O Secret of the white and unknown world! too  
strong hast thou been for us; we were as nothing to  
thee; thou hast drawn them from us; thou wouldst  
not let them go.

The long day passed ; thou wouldst not let them go.

The long, long night came and went ; thou wouldst not let them go.

O thou insatiate ! What to thee are youth, and life, and hope, and love ?

For thou art Death, not Life ; thou art Despair, not Hope.

Nought to thee the rush of youthful blood ; nought to thee the beauty and strength of our loved ones.

The breath of their bodies was not sweet to thee ; they loved thee, and thou lovedst not them.

They followed thee, thou didst not look upon them ; but still, O thou inviolate ! still did they follow thee.

Thee did they follow through storm, through perils of the ice, and of the unknown darkness.

The sharp spears of the frost they feared not ; the terrors of death they feared not. For thee, for thee, for thee, not for us ; only that they might look upon thy face !

All these they endured for thee ; the thought of us whom yet they loved, this also they endured for thee.

For thou art beautiful, beyond the beauty of woman.  
In thy hair are the stars of night. Thou wrappest  
about thee garments of fire that burn not, and are  
never quenched;

When thou movest they are moved; when thou  
breathest they tremble.

Yea, awful art thou in thy beauty; with white fingers  
beckoning in mists and shadows of the frozen sea:  
drawing to thee the hearts of heroes.

## II.

LONG, long have they tarried in thy gates, O North!  
But now thou hast given them up. Lo, they come  
to us once more,—our beloved, our only ones!

O dearest, why have ye stayed so long?

With ye, night and day have come and gone, but  
with us there was night only.

But no, we will not reproach ye, hearts of our  
hearts,—dearest and best; our fathers, our children,  
our brothers, our lovers!

Come back to us! Behold our arms are open for  
you; ye are ours; ye have returned unto us; ye shall  
never go hence again.

But why are ye silent, why do ye not stir, why do ye not speak to us, O beloved ones?

White are your cheeks like snow; your eyes they do not look upon us.

So long ye have been gone, and is this your joy to see us once more?

Lo! do we not welcome you? Are not our souls glad? Do not our tears, long kept, fall upon your faces?

Or do ye but sleep well, after those hard and weary labors? O now awaken, for ye shall take rest and pleasure,—here are your homes and kindred!

Listen, beloved: here is your sister, here is your brother, here is your lover!

### III.

THEY will not hearken to our voices.

They are still: their eyes look not upon us.

O insatiate, O Secret of the white and unknown world, cruel indeed thou art!

Thou hast sent back to us our best beloved; their bodies thou hast rendered up, but their spirits thou hast taken away from us forever.

In life thou didst hold them from us — and in death,  
in death they are thine.

NEW YORK, February 20, 1884.



## ILL TIDINGS.

(THE STUDIO CONCERT.)

IN the long studio from whose towering walls  
Greek Pheidias beams, and Angelo appalls,  
Eager the listening, downcast faces throng  
While violins their piercing tones prolong.  
At times I know not if I see, or hear,  
Milo's calm smile, or some not sorrowing tear  
Down-falling on the surface of the stream  
That music pours across my waking dream.  
Ah, is it then a dream that while repeat  
Those chords, like strokes of silver-shod light feet,  
And the great Master's music marches on—  
I hear the horses of the Parthenon?

. . . . .

But all to-day seems vague, unreal, far,  
With fear and discord in the dearest strain,  
For 'neath yon slowly-sinking western star  
One that I love lies on her bed of pain.

*A NEW WORLD.*

“I KNOW,” he said,

“The thunder and the lightning have passed by  
And all the earth is black, and burnt, and dead;  
But, friend, the grass will grow again, the flowers  
Again will bloom, the summer birds will sing,  
And the all-healing sun will shine once more.”

“Blind prophecy,” she answered in her woe.  
Yet still, as time wore on, the prophet’s words  
Came true,—but not all true. (So will it be  
With all who here shall suffer mortal loss:)  
Ere long the grass, the flowers, the birds, the sun  
Once more made bright the bleak and desolate earth;  
They came once more, those joys of other days;  
She felt them, moved among them, and was glad.

Glad — glad! O mocking word! They came once  
more,

But not the same to her. Familiar they  
As a remembered dream, and beautiful —  
But changed, all changed, the whole world changed  
forever.





### III.





CONGRESS: 1878.

'T WAS in the year when mutterings, loud and deep,  
From the roused beast were heard in all the land,  
And grave men questioned: "Can the State withstand  
The shock and strain to come? Oh, will she keep  
Firm her four walls, should the wild creature leap  
To ruin and ravish? Will her pillars planned  
By the great dead, lean then to either hand?  
The dead! would heaven they might awake from  
sleep!"

Haply (I thought), our Congress still may hold  
One voice of power,—when lo! upon the blast  
A sound like jackals ravening to and fro.  
Great God! And has it come to this at last?  
Such noise, such shame, where once, not long ago,  
The pure and wise their living thoughts outrolled.

## REFORM.

## I.

OH, how shall I help to right the world that is  
going wrong!  
And what can I do to hurry the promised time of  
peace!  
The day of work is short and the night of sleep is  
long;  
And whether to pray or preach, or whether to sing  
a song,  
To plow in my neighbor's field, or to seek the golden  
fleece,  
Or to sit with my hands in my lap, and wish that  
ill would cease!

## II.

I think, sometimes, it were best just to let the Lord  
alone;  
I am sure some people forget He was here before  
they came;

Though they say it is all for His glory, 't is a good  
deal more for their own,

That they peddle their petty schemes, and blate and  
babble and groan.

I sometimes think it were best, and I were little to  
blame,

Should I sit with my hands in my lap, in my face  
a crimson shame.

## DECORATION DAY.

## I.

SHE saw the bayonets flashing in the sun,  
The flags that proudly waved ; she heard the bugles  
calling ;  
She saw the tattered banners falling  
About the broken staffs, as one by one  
The remnant of the mighty army passed ;  
And at the last  
Flowers for the graves of those whose fight was done.

## II.

She heard the tramping of ten thousand feet  
As the long line swept round the crowded square ;  
She heard the incessant hum  
That filled the warm and blossom-scented air,—  
The shrilling fife, the roll and throb of drum,

The happy laugh, the cheer.— Oh glorious and meet  
To honor thus the dead,  
Who chose the better part  
And for their country bled!  
—The dead! Great God! she stood there in the street,  
Living, yet dead in soul and mind and heart —  
While far away  
His grave was decked with flowers by strangers'  
hands to-day.

---

## NORTH TO THE SOUTH.

LAND of the South, whose stricken heart and brow  
Bring grief to eyes that erewhile only knew  
For their own loss to sorrow,—spurn not thou  
These tribute tears,—ah, we have suffered too.

NEW ORLEANS, 1885.



## AT THE PRESIDENT'S GRAVE.

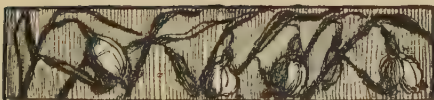
(SEPTEMBER 19, 1881.)

ALL summer long the people knelt  
And listened at the sick man's door:  
Each pang which that pale sufferer felt  
Throbb'd through the land from shore to shore;  
And as the all-dreaded hour drew nigh,  
What breathless watching, night and day!  
What tears, what prayers! Great God on high,—  
Have we forgotten how to pray!  
O broken-hearted, widowed one,  
Forgive us if we press too near!  
Dead is our husband, father, son,—  
For we are all one household here.  
And not alone here by the sea,  
And not in his own land alone,  
Are tears of anguish shed with thee—  
In this one loss the world is one.

And thou remember,—though relief  
Come not till thine own day grow dim,—  
That never, in this world of grief,  
Was mortal ever mourned like him.

EPITAPH.

A man not perfect, but of heart  
So high, of such heroic rage,  
That even his hopes became a part  
Of earth's eternal heritage.



## THE BURIAL OF GRANT.

(NEW-YORK, AUGUST 8, 1885.)

## I.

YE living soldiers of the mighty war,  
Once more from roaring cannon and the drums  
And bugles blown at morn, the summons comes;  
Forget the halting limb, each wound and scar:  
Once more your Captain calls to you;  
Come to his last review!

## II.

And come ye, too, bright spirits of the dead,  
Ye who went heavenward from the embattled field;  
And ye whose harder fate it was to yield  
Life from the loathful prison or anguished bed:  
Dear ghosts! come join your comrades here  
Beside this sacred bier.

## III.

Nor be ye absent, ye immortal band,—  
Warriors of ages past, and our own age,—  
Who drew the sword for right, and not in rage,  
Made war that peace might live in all the land,  
Nor ever struck one vengeful blow,  
But helped the fallen foe.

## IV.

And fail not ye—but, ah, ye falter not—  
To join his army of the dead and living,  
Ye who once felt his might, and his forgiving:  
Brothers, whom more in love than hate he smote.  
For all his countrymen make room  
By our great hero's tomb!

## V.

Come soldiers,—not to battle as of yore,  
But come to weep; ay, shed your noblest tears;  
For lo, the stubborn chief, who knew not fears,  
Lies cold at last, ye shall not see him more.  
How long grim Death he fought and well,  
That poor, lean frame doth tell.

## VI.

All's over now; here let our Captain rest,  
Silent amid the blare of praise and blame;  
Here let him rest, alone with his great fame,—  
Here in the city's heart he loved the best,  
And where our sons his tomb may see  
To make them brave as he:—

## VII.

As brave as he—he on whose iron arm  
Our Greatest leaned, our gentlest and most wise,—  
Leaned when all other help seemed mocking lies,  
While this one soldier checked the tide of harm,  
And they together saved the State,  
And made it free and great.

THE DEAD COMRADE.

At the burial of Grant, a bugler stood forth and sounded "taps."

I.

COME, soldiers, arouse ye !  
Another has gone ;  
Let us bury our comrade,  
His battles are done.

His sun it is set ;  
He was true, he was brave,  
He feared not the grave,  
There is nought to regret.

II.

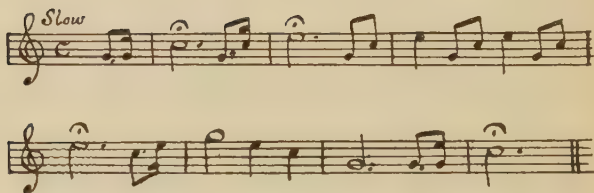
Bring music and banners  
And wreaths for his bier,—  
No fault of the fighter  
That Death conquered here.

Bring him home ne'er to rove,  
Bear him home to his rest,  
And over his breast  
Fold the flag of his love.

## III.

Great Captain of battles,  
We leave him with thee !  
What was wrong, O forgive it ;  
His spirit make free.

Sound taps, and away !  
Out lights, and to bed !  
Farewell, soldier dead !  
Farewell — for a day.



ON THE LIFE-MASK OF ABRAHAM  
LINCOLN.

THIS bronze doth keep the very form and mold  
Of our great martyr's face. Yes, this is he:  
That brow all wisdom, all benignity;  
That human, humorous mouth; those cheeks  
that hold  
Like some harsh landscape all the summer's gold;  
That spirit fit for sorrow, as the sea  
For storms to beat on; the lone agony  
Those silent, patient lips too well foretold.  
Yes, this is he who ruled a world of men  
As might some prophet of the elder day,—  
Brooding above the tempest and the fray  
With deep-eyed thought and more than mortal ken.  
A power was his beyond the touch of art  
Or armed strength: his pure and mighty heart.



## THE PRESIDENT.

NOR his to guide the ship while tempests blow,—  
War's billows burst, and glorious thunders beat;  
Not his the joy to see an alien foe  
Fly down the dreadful valley of defeat;  
Not his the fame of that great soul and tried,  
Who conquered civil peace by arms and love;  
Nor his the emprise of one who lately died  
Hand-clasped with foes, who weep his tomb above.  
But this his task,—all passionless, unsplendid,—  
To teach, in public place, a purer creed;  
To build a wall,—alone or well befriended,—  
Against the partisan's ignoble greed.  
Or will he fail, or triumph? History lays  
A moment down her pen. A nation waits,—  
and prays.

#### IV.





## ESSIPOFF.

WHAT is her playing like?  
I ask—while dreaming here under her music's  
power.

'T is like the leaves of the dark passion-flower  
Which grows on a strong vine whose roots, oh deep  
they sink,  
Deep in the ground, that flower's pure life to drink.

## II.

What is her playing like?  
'T is like a bird  
Who, singing in a wild wood, never knows  
That its lone melody is heard  
By wandering mortal, who forgets his heavy woes.

## ADELE AUS DER OHE.

(LISZT.)

## I.

WHAT is her playing like?  
'Tis like the wind in wintry northern valleys.  
A dream-pause,— then it rallies  
And once more bends the pine-tops, shatters  
The ice-crags, whitely scatters  
The spray along the paths of avalanches;  
Startles the blood, and every visage blanches.

## II.

Half-sleeps the wind above a swirling pool  
That holds the trembling shadow of the trees;  
Where waves too wildly rush to freeze  
Though all the air is cool;  
And hear, oh hear, while musically call  
With nearer tinkling sounds, or distant roar,  
Voices of fall on fall;  
And now a swelling blast, that dies; and now—  
no more, no more.

(CHOPIN.)

## I.

AH, what celestial art!  
And can sweet thoughts become pure tone and float,  
All music, into the tranced mind and heart!  
Her hand scarce stirs the singing, wiry metal,—  
Hear from the wild-rose fall each perfect petal!

## II.

And can we have, on earth, of heaven the whole!  
Heard thoughts—the soul of inexpressible thought;  
Roses of sound  
That strew melodious leaves upon the silent ground;  
And music that is music's very soul,  
Without one touch of earth,—  
Too tender, even, for sorrow, too bright for mirth.

## MODJESKA.

THERE are four sisters known to mortals well,  
Whose names are Joy and Sorrow, Death and Love:  
This last it was who did my footsteps move  
To where the other deep-eyed sisters dwell.  
To-night, or ere yon painted curtain fell,  
These, one by one, before my eyes did rove  
Through the brave mimic world that Shakespeare wove.  
Lady! thy art, thy passion were the spell  
That held me, and still holds; for thou dost show,  
With those most high each in his sovereign art,—  
Shakespeare supreme, and Tuscan Angelo,—  
Great art and passion are one. Thine too the part  
To prove, that still for him the laurels grow  
Who reaches through the mind to pluck the heart.

FOR AN ALBUM.

WORTHAM  
Literary Society  
LIBRARY.

• FOR AN ALBUM.

(TO BE READ ONE HUNDRED YEARS AFTER.)

A CENTURY'S summer breezes shook  
The maple shadows on the grass  
Since she who owned this ancient book  
From the green world to heaven did pass.

Beside a northern lake she grew,  
A wild-flower on its craggy walls;  
Her eyes were mingled gray and blue,  
Like waves where summer sunlight falls.

Cheerful from morn to evening-close,  
No humblest work, no prayer forgot:  
Yet who of woman born but knows  
The sorrows of our mortal lot!

And she too suffered, though the wound  
Was hidden from the general gaze,



And most from those who thus had found  
An added burden for their days.

She had no special grace, nor art; .  
Her riches not in banks were kept:  
Her treasure was a gentle heart,  
Her skill to comfort those who wept.

Not without foes her days were passed,  
For quick her burning scorn was fanned.  
Her friends were many — least and last,  
A poet from a distant land.

## PORTO FINO.

I KNOW a girl—she is a poet's daughter,  
And many-mooded as a poet's day,  
And changing as the Mediterranean water;  
We walked together by an emerald bay,

So deep, so green, so promontory-hidden  
That the lost mariner might peer in vain  
Through storms, to find where he erewhile had ridden,  
Safe-sheltered from the wild and windy main.

Down the high stairs we clambered just to rest a  
Cool moment in the church's antique shade.  
How gay the aisles and altars! 'Twas the festa  
Of brave Saint George who the old dragon laid.

How bright the little port! The red flags fluttered,  
Loud clanged the bells, and loud the children's glee:  
What though some distant, unseen storm-cloud mut-  
tered,  
And waves breathed big along the weedy quay.

We climbed the hill whose rising cleaves asunder  
Green bay and blue immeasurable sea ;  
We heard the breakers at its bases thunder ;  
We heard the priests' harsh chant soar wild and free.

Then through the graveyard's straight and narrow portal  
Our journey led. How dark the place ! How strange  
Its steep, black mountain wall,— as if the immortal  
Spirit could thus be stayed its skyward range !

Beyond, the smoky olives clothed the mountains  
In green that grew through many a moon-lit night.  
Below, down cleft and chasm leaped snowy fountains ;  
Above, the sky was warm, and blue, and bright ;

When, sudden, from out a fair and smiling heaven  
Burst forth the rain, quick as a trumpet-blare :  
Yet still the Italian sun each drop did leaven,  
And turned the rain to diamonds in the air.

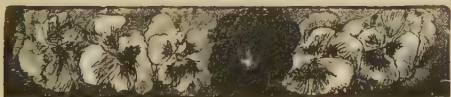
So passed the day in shade, and shower, and sun,  
Like thine own moods, thou sweet and changeful  
maiden !

Great Heaven ! deal kindly with this gentle one,  
Nor let her soul too heavily be laden.

TO F. F. C.

(ON THE PANSY, HER CLASS-FLOWER.)

THIS is the flower of thought:  
Take it, thou empress of a land  
Of true hearts, from a loyal subject's hand;  
And with it naught,  
O naught beneath life's ever-brightening dome  
Of sad remembrance! May it bring  
Dreams of joy only, and of happy days  
Backward and still to come;—  
Of birds that sang last eve, and still shall sing  
In dawns of morrows only joyful lays.  
Or yet, if thou shouldst go  
Not utterly unscathed of mortal woe—  
Thy blackest hour be touched by memory's gold,  
As is this flower's leaf. Then shalt thou hold  
Ever a young heart in thee, ever as now  
A look of quenchless youth beneath thy peerless brow.



## IMPROMPTUS.

## I.

## ART.

FOLLOWING the sun, westward the march of power!  
The Rose of Might blooms in our new-world mart:  
But see, just bursting forth from bud to flower,  
A late, slow growth,—the fairer Rose of Art.

## II.

## TO A SOUTHERN GIRL.

SWEET rose that bloomed on the red field of war,  
Think not too sadly of the dreadful Past!  
Are not old foes new friends—not least, though last,  
One whose far home lies 'neath the Northern star?

## III.

## FOR A FAN.

EACH of us answers to a call;  
Master or mistress have we all.  
I belong to lovely Anne;  
Dost thou not wish *thou* wert a fan?  
Thus to be treasured, thus to be prest,  
Pleasuring thus, and thus caressed?

V.





## MUSIC AND WORDS.

### I.

THIS day I heard such music that I thought :  
Hath human speech the power thus to be wrought,  
Into such melody ; pure, sensuous sound,—  
Into such mellow, murmuring mazes caught ;  
Can words (I said), when these keen tones are bound —  
(Silent, except in memory of this hour)—  
Can human words alone usurp the power  
Of trembling strings that thrill to the very soul,  
And of this ecstasy bring back the whole ?

### II.

Ah no, 'twas answered in my inmost heart,  
Unto itself sufficient is each art,  
And each doth utter what none other can —  
Some hidden mood of the large soul of man.



Ah, think not thou with words well interweaved  
To wake the tones wherein the viol grieved  
With its most heavy burden; think not thou,  
Adventurous, to push thy shallop's prow  
Into that surge of well-remembered tones,—  
Striving to match each wandering wind that moans,  
Each bell that tolls, and every bugle's blowing  
With some most fitting word, some verse bestowing  
A never-shifting form on that which passed  
Swift as a bird that glimmers down the blast.

## III.

So, still unworded, save in memory mute,  
Rest thou sweet hour of viol and of lute;  
Of thoughts that never, never can be spoken,  
Too frail for the rough usage of men's words,—  
Thoughts that shall keep their silence all unbroken  
Till music once more stirs them:—then like birds  
That in the night-time slumber, they shall wake,  
While all the leaves of all the forest shake;—  
Oh, hark, I hear it now, that tender strain  
Fulfilled with all of sorrow save its pain.

## THE POET'S FAME.

MANY the songs of power the poet wrought  
To shake the hearts of men. Yea, he had caught  
The inarticulate and murmuring sound  
That comes at midnight from the darkened ground  
When the earth sleeps; for this he framed a word  
Of human speech, and hearts were strangely stirred  
That listened. And for him the evening dew  
Fell with a sound of music, and the blue  
Of the deep, starry sky he had the art  
To put in language that did seem a part  
Of the great scope and progeny of nature.  
In woods, or waves, or winds, there was no creature  
Mysterious to him. He was too wise  
Either to fear, or follow, or despise  
Whom men call Science,—for he knew full well  
All she had told, or still might live to tell,  
Was known to him before her very birth:

Yea, that there was no secret of the earth,  
Nor of the waters under, nor the skies,  
That had been hidden from the poet's eyes ;  
By him there was no ocean unexplored,  
Nor any savage coast that had not roared  
Its music in his ears.

He loved the town,—  
Not less he loved the ever-deepening brown  
Of summer twilights on the enchanted hills ;  
Where he might listen to the starts and thrills  
Of birds that sang and rustled in the trees,  
Or watch the footsteps of the wandering breeze  
And the birds' shadows as they fluttered by  
Or slowly wheeled across the unclouded sky.

All these were written on the poet's soul,—  
But he knew, too, the utmost, distant goal  
Of the human mind. His fiery thought did run  
To Time's beginning, ere yon central sun  
Had warmed to life the swarming broods of men.  
In waking dreams, his many-visioned ken  
Clutched the large, final destiny of things.

He heard the starry music, and the wings  
Of beings unfelt by others thrilled the air  
About him. Yet the loud and angry blare  
Of tempests found an echo in his verse,  
And it was here that lovers did rehearse  
The ditties they would sing when, not too soon,  
Came the warm night,—shadows, and stars, and moon.

Who heard his songs were filled with noble rage,  
And wars took fire from his prophetic page:  
Most righteous wars, wherein, 'midst blood and tears,  
The world rushed onward through a thousand years.  
And still he made the gentle sounds of peace  
Heroic,—bade the nation's anger cease!  
Bitter his songs of grief for those who fell,—  
And for all this the people loved him well.

They loved him well and therefore, on a day,  
They said with one accord: "Behold how gray  
Our poet's head hath grown! Ere 't is too late  
Come, let us crown him in our Hall of State:  
Ring loud the bells, give to the winds his praise,  
And urge his fame to other lands and days!"

So was it done, and deep his joy therein.  
But passing home at night, from out the din  
Of the loud Hall, the poet, unaware,  
Moved through a lonely and dim-lighted square—  
There was the smell of lilacs in the air  
And then the sudden singing of a bird,  
Startled by his slow tread. What memory stirred  
Within his brain he told not. Yet this night—  
Lone lingering when the eastern heavens were bright—  
He wove a song of such immortal art  
That there lives not in all the world one heart—  
One human heart unmoved by it. Long! long!  
The laurel-crown has failed, but not that song  
Born of the night and sorrow. Where he lies  
At rest beneath the ever-shifting skies,  
Age after age, from far-off lands they come,  
With tears and flowers, to seek the poet's tomb.

## THE POET'S PROTEST.

O MAN with your rule and measure,  
Your tests and analyses!  
You may take your empty pleasure,  
May kill the pine, if you please;  
You may count the rings and the seasons,  
May hold the sap to the sun,  
You may guess at the ways and the reasons  
Till your little day is done.

But for me the golden crest  
That shakes in the wind and launches  
Its spear toward the reddening West!  
For me the bough and the breeze,  
The sap unseen, and the glint  
Of light on the dew-wet branches,—  
The hiding shadows, the hint  
Of the soul of mysteries.

You may sound the sources of life,  
And prate of its aim and scope;  
You may search with your chilly knife  
Through the broken heart of hope.  
But for me the love-sweet breath,  
And the warm, white bosom heaving,  
And never a thought of death,  
And only the bliss of living.

TO A YOUNG POET.

IN the morning of the skies  
I heard a lark arise.  
On the first day of the year  
A wood-flower did appear.

Like a violet, like a lark,  
Like the dawn that kills the dark,  
Like a dew-drop, trembling, clinging,  
Is the poet's first sweet singing.



"WHEN THE TRUE POET COMES."

"WHEN the true poet comes, how shall we know him ?

By what clear token,—manners, language, dress ?

Or will a voice from heaven speak and show him,—

Him the swift healer of the earth's distress ?

Tell us, that when the long-expected comes

At last, with mirth and melody and singing,

We him may greet with banners, beat of drums,

Welcome of men and maids and joybells ringing :

And, for this poet of ours,

Laurels and flowers."

Thus shall ye know him, this shall be his token,—

Manners like other men, an unstrange gear,

His speech not musical, but harsh and broken

Will sound at first, each line a driven spear.

For he will sing as in the centuries olden,  
Before mankind its earliest fire forgot—  
Yet whoso listens long hears music golden.  
—How shall ye know him? Ye shall know him not  
Till, ended hate and scorn,  
To the grave he's borne.

### WANTED, A THEME!

“GIVE me a theme,” the little poet cried,  
“And I will do my part.”  
“’Tis not a theme you need,” the world replied;  
“You need a heart.”

### STREPHON AND SARDON.

“YOUNG Strephon wears his heart upon his sleeve,”  
Thus wizened Sardon spoke, with scoffing air;  
Perhaps ’twas envy made the gray-beard grieve—  
For Sardon never had a heart to wear.

## YOUTH AND AGE.

## I.

" I LIKE your book, my boy,  
'Tis full of youth and joy,  
And love that sings and dreams.  
Yet it puzzles me," he said ;  
" A string of pearls it seems,—  
But I cannot find the thread."

## II.

" O friend of olden days !  
Dear to me is your praise :  
But, many and many a year  
You must go back, I fear ;  
You must journey back," I said,  
" To find that golden thread !"

THE SONNET.

WHAT is a sonnet? 'Tis the pearly shell  
That murmurs of the far-off murmuring sea;  
A precious jewel carved most curiously;  
It is a little picture painted well.

What is a sonnet? 'Tis the tear that fell  
From a great poet's hidden ecstasy;  
A two-edged sword, a star, a song — ah me!  
Sometimes a heavy-tolling funeral bell.

This was the flame that shook with Dante's breath;  
The solemn organ whereon Milton played,  
And the clear glass where Shakespeare's shadow falls:

A sea this is — beware who ventureth!  
For like a fjord the narrow floor is laid  
Mid-ocean deep to the sheer mountain walls.

## A SONNET OF DANTE.

(*"Tanto gentile e tanto onesta pare."*)

So FAIR, so pure my lady as she doth go  
Upon her way, and others doth salute,  
That every tongue becometh trembling-mute,  
And every eye is troubled by that glow.  
Her praise she hears as on she moveth slow,  
Clothed with humility as with a suit;  
She seems a thing that came (without dispute)  
From heaven to earth a miracle to show.  
Through eyes that gaze on her benignity  
There passes to the heart a sense so sweet  
That none can understand who may not prove;  
And from her countenance there seems to move  
A gentle spirit, with all love replete,  
That to the soul comes, saying, "Sigh, O sigh!"

## THE NEW TROUBADOURS.

(AVIGNON, 1879.)

THEY said that all the troubadours had flown,—  
No bird to flash a wing or swell a throat!  
But as we journeyed down the rushing Rhone  
To Avignon, what joyful note on note  
Burst forth beneath thy shadow, O Ventour!  
Whose eastward forehead takes the dawn divine:  
Ah, dear Provence! ah, happy troubadour,  
And that sweet, mellow, antique song of thine!  
First Roumanille, the leader of the choir,  
Then graceful Matthieu, tender, sighing, glowing,  
Then Wyse all fancy, Aubanel all fire,  
And Mistral, mighty as the north-wind's blowing;  
And youthful Gras, and lo! among the rest  
A mother-bird who sang above her nest.

## KEATS.

TOUCH not with dark regret his perfect fame,  
Sighing, "Had he but lived he had done so ;"  
Or, "Were his heart not eaten out with woe  
John Keats had won a prouder, mightier name!"  
Take him for what he was and did—nor blame  
Blind fate for all he suffered. Thou shouldst know  
Souls such as his escape no mortal blow—  
No agony of joy, or sorrow, or shame!  
"Whose name was writ in water!" What large laughter  
Among the immortals when that word was brought!  
Then when his fiery spirit rose flaming after  
High toward the topmost heaven of heavens up-caught!  
"All hail! our younger brother!" Shakespeare said,  
And Dante nodded his imperial head.

AN INSCRIPTION IN ROME.

(PIAZZA DI SPAGNA.)

SOMETHING there is in Death not all unkind,  
He hath a gentler aspect, looking back;  
For flowers may bloom in the dread thunder's track,  
And even the cloud that struck with light was lined.  
Thus, when the heart is silent, speaks the mind;  
But there are moments when comes rushing, black  
And fierce upon us, the old, awful lack,  
And Death once more is cruel, senseless, blind.  
So when I saw beside a Roman portal  
"In this house died John Keats"—for tears that  
sprung  
I could no further read. O bard immortal!  
Not for thy fame's sake—but so young, so young;  
Such beauty vanished, spilled such heavenly wine,  
All quenched that power of deathless song divine!



## DESECRATION.

THE poet died last night ;  
    Outworn his mortal frame.  
He hath fought well the fight,  
    And won a deathless name.

Bring laurel for his bier,  
    And flowers to deck the hearse.  
The tribute of a tear  
    To his immortal verse.

Hushed is that piercing strain,—  
    Who heard, for pleasure wept.  
His were our joy and pain :  
    He sang — our sorrow slept.

Yes, weep for him ; no more  
    Shall such high songs have birth :  
Gone is the harp he bore  
    Forever from the earth.

Weep, weep, and scatter flowers  
Above his precious dust :  
Child of the heavenly powers,—  
Divine, and pure, and just.

Weep, weep—for when to-night  
Doth hoot the horned owl,  
Beneath the pale moon's light  
The human ghouls will prowl.

What creatures those will throng  
Within the sacred gloom,  
To do our poet wrong—  
To break the sealed tomb ?

Not the great world and gay  
That pities not, nor halts  
By thoughtless night or day—  
But, O more sordid-false,

His trusted friend and near,  
To whom his spirit moved ;  
The brother he held dear ;  
The woman that he loved.

## "JOCOSERIA."

MEN grow old before their time,  
With the journey half before them:  
In languid rhyme  
They deplore them.

Life up-gathers carks and cares,  
So good-bye to maid and lover!  
Find three gray hairs,  
And cry, "All's over!"

Look at Browning! How he keeps  
In the seventies still a heart  
That never sleeps,—  
Still an art

Full of youth's own grit and power,  
Thoughts we deemed to boys belonging,—  
The spring-time's flower,  
Love-and-longing.

## TO AN ENGLISH FRIEND,

WITH EMERSON'S "POEMS."

EDMUND, in this book you'll find  
Music from a prophet's mind.  
Even when harsh the numbers be,  
There's an inward melody;  
And when sound is one with sense,  
'Tis a bird's song — sweet, intense.  
Chide me not the book is small,  
For in it lies our all in all:  
We who in Eldorado live  
Have no better gift to give.  
When no more is silver mill,  
Golden stream, or golden hill —  
Search the New World from pole to pole,  
Here you'll find its singing soul!

## OUR ELDER POETS.

(1878.)

HE is gone. We shall not see again  
That reverend form, those silver locks;  
Silent at last the iron pen  
And words that poured like molten rocks.

He is gone, and we who thought him cold  
Miss from our lives a generous heat,  
And know that stolid form did hold  
A fire that burned, a heart that beat.

He is gone, but other bards remain:  
Our gray old prophet, young at heart,  
Our scholar-poet's patriot strain;  
And he of the wise and mellow art.

And he who first to science sought,  
But to the merry muses after;  
Who learned a secret never taught—  
The knowledge of men's tears and laughter.

He also in whose music rude  
Our peopled woods and prairies speak,  
Resounding, in his modern mood,  
The tragic fury of the Greek.

And he, too, lingers round about  
The darling city of his birth—  
The bard whose gray eyes looking out  
Find scarce one peer in all the earth.



## LONGFELLOW'S "BOOK OF SONNETS."

'Twas Sunday evening as I wandered down  
The central highway of this swarming place,  
And felt a pleasant stillness,—not a trace  
Of Saturday's harsh turmoil in the town:  
Then as a gentle breeze just stirs a gown,  
Yet almost motionless, or as the face  
Of silence smiles, I heard the chimes of "Grace"  
Sound murmuring through the autumn evening's  
brown.

To-day, again, I passed along Broadway  
In the fierce tumult and mid-noise of noon,  
While 'neath my feet the solid pavement shook;  
When lo! it seemed that bells began to play  
Upon a Sabbath eve a silver tune,—  
For as I walked I read the poet's book.

"H. H."

I WOULD that in the verse she loved some word,  
 Not all unfit, I to her praise might frame:  
 Some word wherein the memory of her name  
 Should through long years its incense still afford.  
 But no, her spirit smote with its own sword;  
 Herself has lit the fire whose blood-red flame  
 Shall not be quenched: this is her living fame  
 Who struck so well the sonnet's subtle chord.  
 None who e'er knew her can believe her dead;  
 Though should she die they deem it well might be  
 Her spirit took its everlasting flight  
 In summer's glory, by the sunset sea,—  
 That onward through the Golden Gate it fled.  
 Ah, where that bright soul is cannot be night.



## THE MODERN RHYMER.

## I.

Now you who rhyme, and I who rhyme,  
Have not we sworn it, many a time,  
That we no more our verse would scrawl,  
For Shakespeare he had said it all!  
And yet whatever others see  
The earth is fresh to you and me —  
And birds that sing, and winds that blow,  
And blooms that make the country glow,  
And lusty swains, and maidens bright,  
And clouds by day, and stars by night,  
And all the pictures in the skies  
That passed before Will Shakespeare's eyes;  
Love, hate, and scorn,—frost, fire, and flower,—  
On us as well as him have power.  
Go to! our spirits shall not be laid,  
Silenced and smothered by a shade.  
Avon is not the only stream

Can make a poet sing and dream;  
Nor are those castles, queens, and kings  
The height of sublunary things.

## II.

Beneath the false moon's pallid glare,  
By the cool fountain in the square  
(This gray-green, dusty square they set  
Where two gigantic highways met)  
We hear a music rare and new,  
Sweet Shakespeare, was not known to you!  
You saw the New World's sun arise:  
High up it shines in our own skies.  
You saw the ocean from the shore:  
Through mid-seas now our ship doth roar,—  
A wild, new, teeming world of men  
That wakens in the poet's brain  
Thoughts that were never thought before  
Of hope, and longing, and despair,  
Wherein man's never resting race  
Westward, still westward, on doth fare,  
Doth still subdue, and still aspire,

Or turning on itself doth face  
Its own indomitable fire,—  
O million-centuried thoughts that make  
The Past seem but a shallop's wake!

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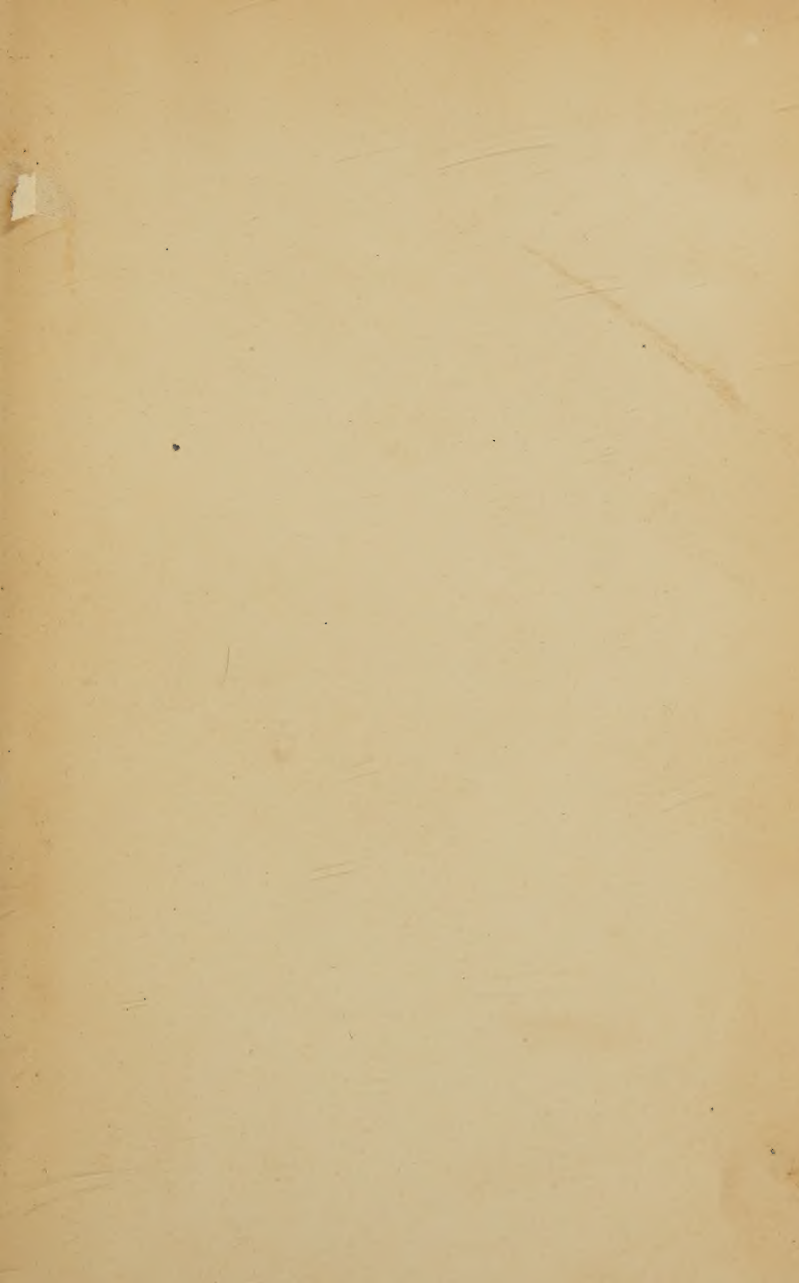










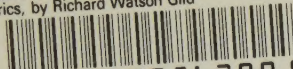




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